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EDITORIAL

Cleaning up state registration offers confidence at polls

Duplicate names, bad addresses leave door open for voter fraud.

Tuesday, May 28, 2013 - 12:01 am

It's not a lot of money in the big scheme of things, but the \$2 million designated in the recent session of the General Assembly will begin the messy but necessary process of cleaning up Indiana's voter registration rolls.

Bloated voters rolls in every one of the state's 92 counties contain the names of people who have moved away, are in prison or have died. Their presence on the registration lists make elections vulnerable to the type of shenanigans that can truly affect the outcome of elections.

Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson is in charge of the state's elections and led the charge to obtain the funds for the statewide project. She knows the importance of cleaning up the voter rolls in maintaining the integrity of the elections and meeting requirements of state and federal laws.

"Every duplicate name and every bad address is just an opportunity for vote fraud," Lawson said.

Purging voter rolls is a painstaking process that requires mass mailings to voters to verify their status and address. It takes time and money. But the end result is worth it in the pursuit of elections that voters can trust.

What is particularly encouraging about this measure and others like it, such as the expansion of voting centers, is that it offers truly meaningful and effective steps at improving elections and making them more voter friendly and less susceptible to tampering.

That's in stark contrast to laws adopted that were clearly motivated by politics, measures such as the state's voter ID law, which had more to do with a nationwide Republican Party strategy of suppressing the turnout of voters more likely to vote Democratic.

To be fair, the plan to clean up voter rolls was initiated in part by federal actions and a pending lawsuit over the poor condition of Indiana's voter rolls.

Whatever it takes to spur action, however, is a good thing. The law takes effect July 1, and we urge all entities involved to move decisively.

Hoosier voters should be able to view the results of their elections with confidence. Cleaning up voter rolls is a major move in that direction.

(Terre Haute) Tribune-Star

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